



August 10, 2021

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor, State of Texas
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

As students and educators throughout Texas begin their third school year affected by COVID-19, they do so amid a resurgent strain of the coronavirus that has undone the progress made, especially through vaccination and masking. With the Delta variant increasing the transmissibility and deadliness of COVID-19, it is vital that we redouble our efforts to slow or prevent the spread of this virus in all settings, including schools, that serve large numbers of students who cannot yet get vaccinated.

As the Legislature works on proposals for creating a virtual option for a limited number of students, we do so with an understanding, shared by experts and practitioners in the education field, that in-person learning is the best arrangement for the vast majority of students. Many parents, however, are concerned that, without assurance that masks will be worn appropriately at school, they must either endanger their children's health by sending them to school or slow their academic progress by keeping them home. This is not a dilemma any parent should face.

Local districts are best positioned to address the concerns of their students' parents, and, in consultation with local health authorities, to develop policies that fit local needs. With an eye to the important principle of local control, we urgently ask you to consider granting authority to school districts to implement masking policies of their own design, developed with feedback from students, parents, educators and local health experts.

The early stages of the pandemic showed the resilience and creativity of local units of government to stem the tide of COVID-19 in their own communities. As we enter this next phase of the pandemic, school districts only await your approval to leverage their local knowledge to fight COVID on all fronts once again.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Carol Alvarado in black ink.

Carol Alvarado
District 6

Handwritten signature of César Blanco in black ink.

César Blanco
District 29

Handwritten signature of Sarah Eckhardt in black ink.

Sarah Eckhardt
District 14





Roland Gutierrez
District 19



Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
District 20



Nathan Johnson
District 16



Eddie Lucio, Jr.
District 27



José Menéndez
District 26



Borris Miles
District 13



Beverly Powell
District 10



Royce West
District 23



John Whitmire
District 15



Judith Zaffirini
District 21